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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/649,293	08/28/2000	Lawrence T. Cohen	2447-012	7384

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EXAMINER

EVANISKO, GEORGE ROBERT

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3762

DATE MAILED: 02/05/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

NR

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/649,293

Applicant(s)

COHEN, LAWRENCE T.

Examiner

George R Evanisko

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 December 2002.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,4-6 and 12-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 4-6, 12-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 5 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 5, "adjacent electrodes" is vague since claim 4 uses "consecutive electrodes".

In claim 17, line 2, "toward" should be deleted. In addition, "closer" and "further" are vague since they are relative terms and it is unclear which direction "further" is. In addition, shouldn't the electrodes be spaced closer at the apical end (further) than at the basal end (closer)?

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) do not apply to the examination of this application as the application

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being examined was not (1) filed on or after November 29, 2000, or (2) voluntarily published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b). Therefore, this application is examined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

Claims 1 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being clearly anticipated by Kuzma et al (6304787).

Claims 1 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Hochmair et al (4284856).

Claims 1 and 12-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hochmair-Desoyer et al ("An eight Channel Scala Tympani Electrode for Auditory Prostheses").

On page 46, the fourth full paragraph, Hochmair-Desoyer describes the spacing between contacts belonging to the same channel (consecutive electrodes) as 1.5 mm and between two neighboring contacts of different channels (other consecutive electrodes) as 0.5 mm. Finally, for the claims, Hochmair-Desoyer states on page 45, that the contacts are placed as near to excitable nerve-structures as possible.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 4-6, 9, and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hochmair et al (4284865).

Hochmair is capable of meeting the functional use recitations presented in the claims. In addition, Hochmair discloses the claimed invention except for the spacing to be different/uniformly graduated between consecutive electrodes. Hochmair does disclose the schematic of the cochlea showing the frequency response, the use of at least four different frequency ranges, the stimulating of the lower frequency stimulation sites near the apex, and does disclose that the electrode contacts can be positioned on the device to stimulate a region of the cochlea for a desired frequency response and in accordance with the frequency response of the cochlea. This provides a clear suggestion that the spacing of the electrodes can be modified to change the distance between adjacent electrodes to have the spacing between adjacent electrodes at the apical end be less than the spacing at the basal end, the spacing to be different in different regions, and the spacing to be uniformly graduated between consecutive electrodes to correspond to a desired frequency response and in accordance with the frequency response of the cochlea. The determination of the most appropriate spacing of the electrodes by routine experimentation, such as having the spacing between adjacent electrodes at the apical end be less than the spacing at the basal end, the spacing to be different in different regions, and the spacing to be uniformly graduated between consecutive electrodes, would, therefore, be prima facie obvious to one having ordinary skill in the medical art.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to the claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. The argument that "the invention is to provide an electrode array with evenly spaced electrodes selected to match the uneven distribution of the aural receptors" is not persuasive since the claims do not claim evenly

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spaced electrodes and since evenly spaced electrodes would not match uneven receptors. In addition, the claims limit the electrodes to "approximately" match the receptors and both Hochmair references state that the electrodes are provided as near to the receptors as possible or to match the frequency response of the receptors.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

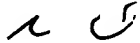
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to George R Evanisko whose telephone number is 703 308-2612. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 6:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Angela Sykes can be reached on 703 308-5181. The fax phone numbers for

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the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703 306-4520 for regular communications and 703 306-4520 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703 308-1148.


George R Evanisko
Primary Examiner
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2/3/3

GRE
February 3, 2003